

In my opinion the following example says all that needs to be said about the raging consolidation of mega-corporations. The implications are ENORMOUS for the future of this country:

"Comcast's recent actions blocking a political email, whether by accident or design, should send a clarion call to the Commission that it cannot allow Applicants to exercise regional dominance over residential broadband. See e.g. David Swanson, "How Comcast Censors Political Content," Op Ed News/After Downing Street (Jul. 17, 2005). At every turn, Comcast delayed resolution of the problem, ultimately blaming the block on an anti-spam measure

deployed by a contractor, Symantec. Comcast claimed that Symantec had received 46,000 complaints about After Downing Street, but refused to share any of these with AfterDowning Street. Curiously, after identifying the problem, Comcast refused to correct the problem or put After Downing Street in contact with Symantec. Yet when After Downing Street contacted Symantec independently, Symantec immediately removed the block. See e.g. David Swanson, "How Comcast Censors Political Content," Op Ed News/After Downing Street (Jul. 17, 2005). Whether Comcast deliberately blocked afterdowningstreet.org because it disagreed with its politics and its efforts to organize citizens

around a controversial political issue (a distinct possibility in light of their advertising policy on issue ads involving Iraq in 2003) or whether After Downing Street innocently ran afoul of Comcast's efforts to control unsolicited email does not matter. Rather, the Commission must consider how it can permit the actions of a single company to stifle the free flow of information and the course of civic engagement for huge segments of the population."

The concentration of power and control over distribution of media is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are under the operation of a handful of

giant corporations.
If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market. This level of concentration in the cable industry will lead to higher consumer rates and lower quality service.

Since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the \"deregulation\" of cable, consumers have seen their rates jump an average of 59 percent -- with some areas experiencing even more dramatic increases.

We are required to buy channels we don't want or need because the cable operators bundle them together & claim that it \"costs more\" to give the customer only what

he wants. The quality of customer service often reflects the fact that cable television is not a competitive market.

Meanwhile, the cost of cable modem service remains out of reach for many households, holding constant for years and selectively underserving rural and low-income Americans. The American people are watching the digital divide widen even as the need for access to high-speed networks increases.

Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local

governments.

In many communities,
the truly
independent sources
of local news,
information and
culture come from
the public channels
produced at the
local access
centers.

Unfortunately, local
channels lack the
resources to produce
the programming that
citizens want and
need.

The LAST thing we
need is to reward
the anti-competitive
actions of cable
giants by permitting
greater
consolidation in
ownership, reducing
competition, and
encouraging more of
the same.